1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

556 578 472 The attitude toward success in agriculture indicated by the foregoing is held in some measure toward marked success in other professions, but in lesser degree, except perhaps where trading is taken up individually or by two persons in partnership. One of the earliest observers, Pinheiro de Lacerda (*c.* 1790), noted that accusations of witchcraft were most often levelled at the wealthier members of the community.[1] This fear of success has continued down to the present day, but while trading was an open group enterprise in which many individuals acquired wealth, success in that field came to be accepted more quickly than in the more individualistic work of farming. At the present time, commercial activities are carried on largely by individuals alone or in a limited partnership, and the practice, or at least the suspicion, of witchcraft in connexion with them seems to be on the increase. Some may feel that similar attitudes with regard to successful results from cultivation of the soil are now held less strongly than formerly, but [754] I know of no evidence to support such a feeling. One of the commonest traditional patterns for witchcraft is that of a partnership of a senior and a junior member—of parent and child, or of mother's brother and sister's son. That is one reason why urgent suggestions by an older person concerning choice of a profession by a younger are looked upon with disfavour among the Ovimbundu.

868 562 A child should be taught enough diligence and application in cultivating that he or she may not lack the necessities in later adult life. Every boy will take to trading and bargaining almost as naturally as eating, drinking, breathing, and sleeping. Commerce still retains so much of its former glamour that every boy will take it up if and when opportunity offers. The care of younger children comes even more naturally to the girl, and she must also learn the housekeeper's art. Many folk-tales and songs indicate a reluctance on the part of girls to dedicate themselves with diligence to cultivation. In the days of the rubber trade, when girls could also join caravans for the coast and to the interior as porters, there may have been some real basis for this, but at the present time girls are convinced and enthusiastic cultivators, almost 100 per cent.[2] The

[1] *Annaes Maritimos e Coloniaes*, 5a Ser., p. 489 f.

[2] Women coming to live in the coast towns or in other European settlements where they have no fields or gardens find adjustment to life without agricultural labours very difficult.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

I have seen an Ocimbundu male riding an ox without saddle. A cord was passed through the animal's nose to serve as reins. 492

The Portuguese name for horse is *cavalo*, a word which the Ovimbundu use in the form *okavalu*, though there is an Umbundu word *ocingongovala*, which means "going with his neck up." The Umbundu words for donkey and mule are *ocimbulu* and *omula*, respectively. 192

Generally speaking, the ears of animals are not clipped, neither are cattle branded or otherwise marked to indicate ownership, but sometimes the ears of pigs and goats are cut to aid identification. When asked why the tips of the ears of dogs are mutilated an Ocimbundu will say that a dog with uncut ears does not hear when called (Plate LVI, Fig. 2). 231

Not many families own large herds of cattle among the Ovimbundu, and I did not see a big kraal until I was in southwest Angola. Cattle, which are a measure of wealth, are used for paying fines, making funeral feasts, paying debts, and securing wives. The cattle throughout Angola are well-developed, handsome animals (Plate LVII, Fig. 1). The bull remains with the herd the entire year; there is therefore no particular season for the birth of calves. Usually cows are not milked by the Ovimbundu, consequently these people have no milk, butter, or cheese. The Vakuanyama of the south milk their cows and churn butter in calabashes slung on a pole. 233 556 [171]

The Ovimbundu say that milking the cow makes the calf thin, but where the idea of milking the cow is borrowed from the Portuguese the Ovimbundu have a procedure which is as follows: The calf is allowed to suck for a few minutes in order to deceive the cow; then the milker begins his work. At intervals of a few minutes the calf is allowed to suck in order to continue the deception. 234 [177]

Cattle are killed at the funeral feasts of the rich, and the horns of the slaughtered animals are generally mounted on a pole in the vicinity of the grave (Plate XLVI, Fig. 2). [765]

The horns of the cow may be used for making water-pipes in which tobacco is smoked, or they may be employed as magical horns when filled with medicine. The hide is pegged out in the sunlight for one day after it has been scraped; it is then rolled and kept until required. When about to be used, the skin is soaked in water for one day. The hide is used to cover the tops of stools, to make pouches and to manufacture bags for carrying corn. In bygone days each king had a wooden box covered with hide, which contained his powder and metal when he went to war. [illegible]e cow's tail is used 237 281 90

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

[1874-1910]

THE OLD SOCIETY

The trade was conducted in caravans composed of up to several thousand people,[48] under the leadership of *entrepeneurs* called *olofumbelo* (of which the singular is *ofumbelo*). Of such were the individuals whom Serpa Pinto describes as earning wealth equivalent to a thousand pounds or more. Their role was to get together the caravans, to negotiate with the local political authorities, and to provide ritual leadership. The exact relationship between the *ofumbelo* and the ordinary members of the caravan is difficult to see. European travellers found that porters were content with low wages since they had opportunities for private trade, but apparently the caravan organizers had better opportunities for getting rich than had ordinary Ovimbundu. My informants stated that a man organized a caravan to gain wealth. A man who was in a position of prosperity would be known as an *ohwase* (rich man), would stay at home and be expected to assist his relatives.[49]

Different ages and both sexes participated in the trade. Childs says that boys from the age of nine upwards travelled on the caravans, and this is confirmed by Serpa Pinto.[50] Tucker, and my informants however, give the age when caravan travel began as being fifteen or over.[51] Unmarried girls travelled too, but simply acted as helpers to some male relative. The caravan organizers (*olofumbelo*) were old men, I was told, and travelled in the rear while in front of the caravan marched a young man (called the *kesongo*) who carried a flag.[52]

Dr. Childs states that between 1874 and 1886 rubber was gathered from the forests of the interior and took eight months (four months each way presumably) for the Ovimbundu to obtain. From 1886, however, 'red rubber' was obtained from the sandy lands beyond the Cuanza, a journey which only took three months altogether. Hence, Childs states, the trading

[48] A Bastos, *Monografia de Catumbella*, in *Bol. Soc. Geog. Lisboa* 1910 (p. 151) states that caravans of several thousand were used in the 1870s but that by the time of writing (1908–9, nearly the end of the trade) people came in small parties. My informants who would remember this period spoke of the large size of the caravans.

[49] My informants.

[50] Serpa Pinto, p. 164.

[51] J. T. Tucker in *Africa* (Notes and News), April 1956.

[52] Informants.

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

of the men's house, and the headman's loss of status. The new institution of the catechetical school does not revive village solidarity in this form. The contemporary Ovimbundu do not live in a 'village headman society' comparable to those of British Central Africa,[13] since the concept and manifestations of village solidarity around a headman are so notably deficient. Reference may also be made to the economic ethics of the Ovimbundu with their approval of making money and the belief that all loans even within the circle of the elementary family should be repaid, that is, wealth is seen by all as an end in itself rather than a means of obtaining personal loyalties.

In the previous chapter it was shown how the traditional headmanship is no longer a significant legal and political institution. In this chapter I have tried to indicate that it lacks sources of authority and prestige within the village.

The line of argument has involved reference to the contemporary kinship system of which an outline has been given. This will be more fully discussed in later chapters, when a more detailed comparison of present institutions with the traditional kinship system will be made.

[13] For an example of these societies see J. C. Mitchell, *The Yao Village*, Manchester 1956.